

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT:

This report pertains to an investigation of the identification of the burial location, or headstone markings, of a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during the Great War 1914-1921.

SUBMITTED TO:

[CWGC Canadian Agency](#)

66 Slater Street

Suite 1707

Ottawa Ontario Canada K1A 0P4

Att: [Dominique Boulais](#)

Report Date: 28 March 2015

Reason for Submission: ("X" means purpose of the report)

Casualty Identification:		Burial Information:	
Confirmed Identity	X	Burial Location Identified	X
Most Probable Identity		Grave Stone Correction	X
Questionable Identity		Grave Records Correction	X
Incorrect Identity		Request for CWGC Details	
Other		Other	

Supporting Documents: (# refers to attachment number; "I" information provided)

Casualty Identification:		Burial Information:	
Melvin, Arthur	i	Bois-Carre British Cemetery	link
31 st Battalion	i	Thelus, France	i
Sergeant #446966	i	Plot 1 Row C Grave 2	i
Date of Death 9/4/1917	link	Date of Burial / Exhumation	
Attestation Papers	link	Cemetery Schematic	link
Service Record		Graves Registration Report	3
Circumstance of Death	1	Concentration of Grave	
CEF Canada Register		Headstone Register	
War Diary Extract(s)		Casualty Spreadsheet	
Area Map(s)		Trench Map Exhumation	
Trench Map(s)		Grave Stone Photograph	
Possible Candidates List	2	Grave Stone Inscription	
Excluded Candidates List	2	Memorial Inscription/Photo	
Other		Reporting and Review	4

Summary of Findings:

The Graves Registration Report form for Plot 1 Row C Grave 2 lists "31/Canadian Bn. UNKNOWN SGT. 9.4.17".

The only Sergeant of the 31st Battalion killed in 1917 with an unknown grave site, thus on the Vimy Memorial, is Sergeant Arthur Melvin #446966.

Details of Findings:

The findings are conclusive that the remains in Plot 1 Row C Grave 2 are Sergeant Arthur Melvin of the 31st Canadian Infantry Battalion, killed in action at Vimy Ridge on Monday April 9, 1917.

The findings are based on the following:

1. The "Certificate of Death" file for Sergeant Melvin reports that he was killed in action and "*whilst taking part in the attack at Thelus he was instantly killed by a direct hit an enemy 77 m.m. shell which struck him full in the face*" (Attachment #1). It is entirely likely that he could not be visually recognized by a burial party.
2. The identification of Sergeant Melvin was straight forward as he was the only Sergeant of the 31st Battalion listed on the Vimy Memorial that was killed in action and missing in 1917. Further confirmation comes from the clear fact that the date of death was exactly as reported, 9 April 1917 (Attachment #2). Please note that for this investigation we did not show the CWGC table of casualties as they distinguish Sergeants in the 31st Battalion from those in the "X" Coy of the battalion. Our spreadsheet, created from the CWGC database, separates them as "unit 1" and "unit 2" so they can be grouped and shown together.
3. We searched the CWGC data base for any variations on "Sergeant" (Company Sergeant Major, Quarter Master Sergeant, and Lance Sergeant) plus those acting in any capacity. There are none listed, thus there is no attachment.
4. The "Graves Registration Report Form" shows for Plot 1 Row C Grave 2 a "31/Canadian Bn. UNKNOWN SGT. 9.4.17". This is an exact match, and the only match, to Sergeant Arthur Melvin (Attachment #3).

Due to the simplicity of this case, it does not appear necessary to provide any additional information at this time. The actions of the Canadian Expeditionary Force in the attack on Vimy Ridge on April 9, 1917 are well documented. It is also known that all four (4) Divisions of the CEF participated in the attack.

Action Required:

The "Investigative Report" has been prepared in accordance with the procedures and criteria set out by the CWGC, should they wish to make any changes to the commemoration details (Attachment #4).

It is my belief that the evidence in this matter is straight forward and that the records and headstone for Plot 1 Row C Grave 2 should be amended to record the new information.

ATTACHMENT #1

1. NO. 446966,	2. RANK OR RATING Sergeant,	3. SURNAME MELVIN,	4. CHRISTIAN NAMES Arthur,
5. UNIT OR SHIP 31st Battalion.	6. DATE OF CASUALTY 9-4-17.	7. H.Q. FILE NO. 649-M-17769.	8. RELIGION Presbyterian.
9. CIRCUMSTANCES OF CASUALTY "Killed in action." Whilst taking part in the attack at Thelus he was instantly killed by a direct hit from an enemy 77.m.m. shell which struck him full in the face.			
10. NAME, RELATIONSHIP AND ADDRESS OF NEXT OF KIN			
11. LOCATION OF UNIT AT TIME OF CASUALTY			
NOTE:- Items 12, 13 and 14 are not to be completed until grave is permanently located.			
12. CEMETERY	13. LOCATION OF CEMETERY	14. GRAVE LOCATION Grave..... Plot..... Row.....	15. REGISTERED NO. OF GRAVE
16. PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVE TAKEN	17. EXPOSURE NO.	18. PHOTOGRAPH OF GRAVE AND CEMETERY SUPPLIED TO	
19. FURTHER PARTICULARS ON REVERSE SIDE OF SHEET.			

MEB.

M. P. W. 20613
H. Q. 1773-39-1458
135m.-12-19
T. L. 17493-M and D. 10002

ATTACHMENT #2

surname	forename	initials	age	H&A	death 1	death2	rank	regiment	unit1	unit 2	number
WOOD	ALBERT SAMUEL	A S	29		27/09/1916		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.	"A" Coy.	'80071'
McMULLEN	CLAUDE CLIFTON	C C	33		26/09/1916		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.	"B" Coy.	'446480'
GAY	AUBREY HENRY	A H	39		15/09/1916		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.	"C" Coy.	'79224'
BOULDEN	PERCY	P	28		24/09/1916	30/09/1916	6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.	"C" Coy.	'79162'
MELVIN	ARTHUR	A	29		04/09/1917		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.	"C" Coy.	'446966'
BARCLAY	JOSEPH WRIGHT	J W	21		15/09/1916		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.		'79170'
AVERY	THOMAS	T			24/09/1916		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.		'80125'
BLISS	FREDERICK	F	26		24/09/1916	30/09/1916	6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.		'79614'
COLDWELL	WILLIAM EWART	W E	27		24/09/1916	30/09/1916	6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.		'79377'
MACALDIN	THOMAS G.	T G			24/09/1916		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.		'79191'
POYER	JULIAN EDWARD	J E P	36		24/09/1916	30/09/1916	6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.		'80269'
PROFIT	JAMES ALLEN	J A		DCM	26/09/1916		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.		'79873'
MACRAE	DONALD	D		DCM	27/09/1916		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.		'79113'
McNAIR	ARCHIBALD	A	39		25/06/1918		6 Sergeant	Infantry	31st Bn.		'80077'

ATTACHMENT #3

44. 22.10.19

COMPREHENSIVE REPORT
GRAVES REGISTRATION REPORT FORM.
No.1.District.
REPORT NO: 46 SCHEDULE NO: 2.c.

COMMUNE: THELUS

PLACE OF BURIAL BOIS CARRE BRITISH CEMETERY. THELUS.
Map Ref. 51b.B.7.c.1.7

Land belongs to

The following are buried here:-

Regiment.	No.	Name. PLOT 1.	Rank and Initials.	Date of Death.	Cross Erected or des- patched.	Plot Row & Grave.
4/ Canadian Bn. R.G.A.	195515	JONES ✓	PTE.V.H.	9.4.17	all	B.1.
2/ Canadian Bn.	71187	SPATCHER ✓	GMR.G.E.	24.4.17	crosses	B.2.
1/ " "	189460	AUSTIN ✓	PTE.A.E.	25.4.17	erected	B.3.
	400012	ALLEN ✓	PTE.H.	26.4.17		B.4.
5/ Canadian Bn. 31/ Canadian Bn. att T.M.B.		UNKNOWN CANADIAN(b)- C.G.88		4.5.17	or	B.5.
11/ Canadian F.A.	195641	McAULY ✓	PTE.R.	26.4.17	G.R.U'd	B.6.
	42261	ALDRIDGE ✓	SGT.F.G.	25.4.17		B.7.
1/ Canadian Bn.	158074	DEANE ✓	PTE.T.	12.4.17		B.8.
1/ " "	844620	RICHARDSON ✓	PTE.F.	12.4.17		B.9.
41/ Sge.Bty.R.G.A.	...	MORRIS ✓	CPL.E.	23.4.17		B.10.
4/ Canadian Bn.	141529	RATNAGE ✓	CPL.T.H.	26.4.17		B.11.
4/ " "	142500	WARNER ✓	CPL.J.	24.4.17		B.12.
R.G.A.	371154	LLOYD ✓	GMR.L.	24.4.17		C.1.
31/ Cans.att TMB.	435798	MUIR ✓	PTE.H.	9.4.17	CCM/20854	C.1a.
31/ Canadian Bn.		UNKNOWN	SGT.	9.4.17		C.2.
31/ Canadian " "	100491	DUFFY ✓	A/L/C.H.W.	9.4.17)	one	C.3.
31/ " "	696616	SMITH ✓	PTE.G.A.	9.4.17)		C.4.
31/ " "	696786	ERSKINE ✓	PTE.W.R.	9.4.17)	cross	C.5.
4/ " "	772391	LAMB ✓	PTE.W.J.	9.4.17		C.6.
4/ " "	769489	MEWS ✓	PTE.M.	9.4.17	CCM/3252	C.7.
4/ " "	63631	McKAY ✓	L/CPL.G.	9.4.17		C.8.
4/ " "	141848	BATTLA ✓	L/CPL.R.	9.4.17		C.9.

ATTACHMENT #4

This “*Reporting and Review*” attachment is provided to assist all parties in the submission of an investigative report related to the identification of the burial location, or headstone markings, of a member of the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) during the Great War 1914-1921. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) receives a copy of this report in the event they wish to make changes to the commemoration details. In order to alter the records, the CWGC has set out their criteria for the procedure and submission of cases for review, as detailed below. The CWGC is under no obligation to make changes based on a report.

Procedure:	Guideline Criteria for Submission:
All new identification cases need to be assessed in the first instance by the Canadian Agency (CA) and submissions should go to their office directly. After an initial assessment, if the Agency feels that the case is compelling, they will then pass all the documentation to the Commemorations Team at the Commission's Head Office. Head Office will then review the case and inform the CA of their findings. The Canadian authorities will then decide whether or not any changes to the arrangements for commemoration are required and inform the Commission accordingly.	Cases need to present clear and convincing evidence to prove the identity of a casualty and must not be based on assumption or speculation. The Commission's Commemoration Team will also consider whether the findings of a better informed contemporary investigation are being revisited and if there is any new evidence to consider. By way of example, it is unlikely that the Commission would support a revision of the arrangements for the commemoration where it is apparent that no new evidence is being presented and, a better informed previous decision is being revisited some 100 years later.

The following have participated in the preparation, review and submission of this report on a voluntary basis. Those noted below have read the investigative report and compared it to the criteria set out by the CWGC, as a guiding principle, and have agreed to have their name included as part of the review team. The CWGC may contact any of the reviewers at the e-mail address provided below.

Name	Affiliation	E-mail	Contribution
Richard Laughton	Private Researcher LMC Great War Research Co.	rlaughton@laughton.ca	Report Author
Steve St. Amant	Private Researcher	steve_stamant@hotmail.com	Report Reviewer